

ditions and beliefs of my people insist on. Do you trust me?"

"Mr. Wang, I do so, perfectly." "Then telegraph at once to the firm in Foo Chow to which Mr. Wells had letters from here and have them instruct him to take the steamer direct from there to Shanghai. He must on no account return to Amoy. His presence here would thwart all my plans and be almost certain to start up an incipient anti-foreign riot. The sooner he is out of sight, the sooner will this unfortunate purchase of his be forgotten. As for the rest, leave everything to me. No matter what rumors or reports come to you of the officials' treatment of the comprador, I will bring him back to you myself, safe and well, on the 30th of the month. If you attempt to interfere in any way through the consulate or otherwise—I will not be responsible for his life." There was something in his voice and manner that inspired confidence and trust, and the merchant pledged himself to comply with his every request.

On the morning of the last day of the month, true to his promise, Wang Foo appeared at the office of Waring & Co., and by his side, smiling and well, walked the familiar form of Hoo-Sam-Lok, the comprador. Amid the rattling noise of packs of firecrackers they were welcomed into the hong, and all sat down to the joyous feast of welcome which the staff of native employees and servants had provided. "Well, Hoo," said Mr. Watsford, as he extended his hand, "the old firm is certainly glad to see you back! Here's to your health and happiness, and may I express the hope that the whole generation of globetrotters and tiger hunters will hereafter leave Amoy alone, for they have certainly made us trouble enough." "There's just one thing I would like to ask you, Mr. Wang," said the consul as he bade the detective goodbye on the returning steamer, "and that is: How did that fellow ever pass through that ordeal and live? My chair-coolies tell me that he was 'snaked' and 'cangued' and 'bam-

booed'—they saw some of it themselves in the Tao-tai's courtyard—and any one of those is enough, the Lord knows, to finish an ordinary mortal." Wang smiled and answered, "Oh, that is simple enough when one knows the inner methods and secrets. You see, the copper snakes around his arms, which were supposed to be filled with boiling water, were really cold." "But my coolies saw the steam coming out of them?" "They thought they did, but it was only tobacco smoking in the spouts." "But the circular scars upon his arms?" "A little and red blue paint made that look very natural." "And the wooden cangue, or 'collar of a hundred pounds'?" "The wood was all carefully hollowed out and the collar was really no more uncomfortable than some of the stiff linen ones you foreigners wear." "Well, how about the sixty blows

of the licitors' bamboo? They say that sometimes half that number will cripple a man for life?" "That depends upon the weight of the bamboo. Some are natural wood; some are laden with lead—these are the deadly kind—and others are so carefully split open along their length that though they sound like heavy weights they are really no more painful than tappings with the lightest cane." "The whole thing, then, was really a farce from beginning to end, wasn't it?" "That depends upon the point of view. It was necessary for the populace to be convinced of the culprit's innocence and this could only be done by testing him in the way they understood. They would never have taken the Tao-tai's verdict, so he had to convince them, and he did it." "One question more—the lacquer cabinet; what of that? Did Spotty really steal his ancestral cabinet and sell it to the tourist? You know, I have my doubts."

"No, he did not really steal it. He borrowed it, intending to return it in the morning, but the poor chap was drowned by the sinking of his sampan." "And was that proved?" "Yes, the boatman told the story at one of the tea stands on the river bank." "What was it, then, that was packed with the baggage on the boat?" "Oh, that was an imitation, skillfully substituted for the original in the cabin." "Then if Spotty had lived, he would probably have never been found out?" "Probably not, for he would have replaced the cabinet in the morning." "And what would you say was the real value of the treasure which Mr. Wells took away and for which he paid five hundred dollars?" "It would be hard to tell—I should say five dollars, possibly, ten; who knows? He is happy with his curio. Let us be happy also and leave well enough alone." (Copyright, 1918, by McClure Syndicate.)

# To Reclaim an Empire for American Soldiers

(Copyright, 1918, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

**"FARMS for the soldiers!"** Yes and for every man who is willing to work when he comes home from France! Not for hundreds or thousands but for hundreds of thousands and perhaps millions if that many converted by the open-air life of the Army should want to go back to the land! This, in brief, is the project upon which the government is working. It is a big project, bigger than the question involved in giving life work for the soldier. It is a project which, thus beginning, promises to develop into reclamation of waste land that will increase our national wealth by billions of dollars and add a new empire to the active working forces of the American people.

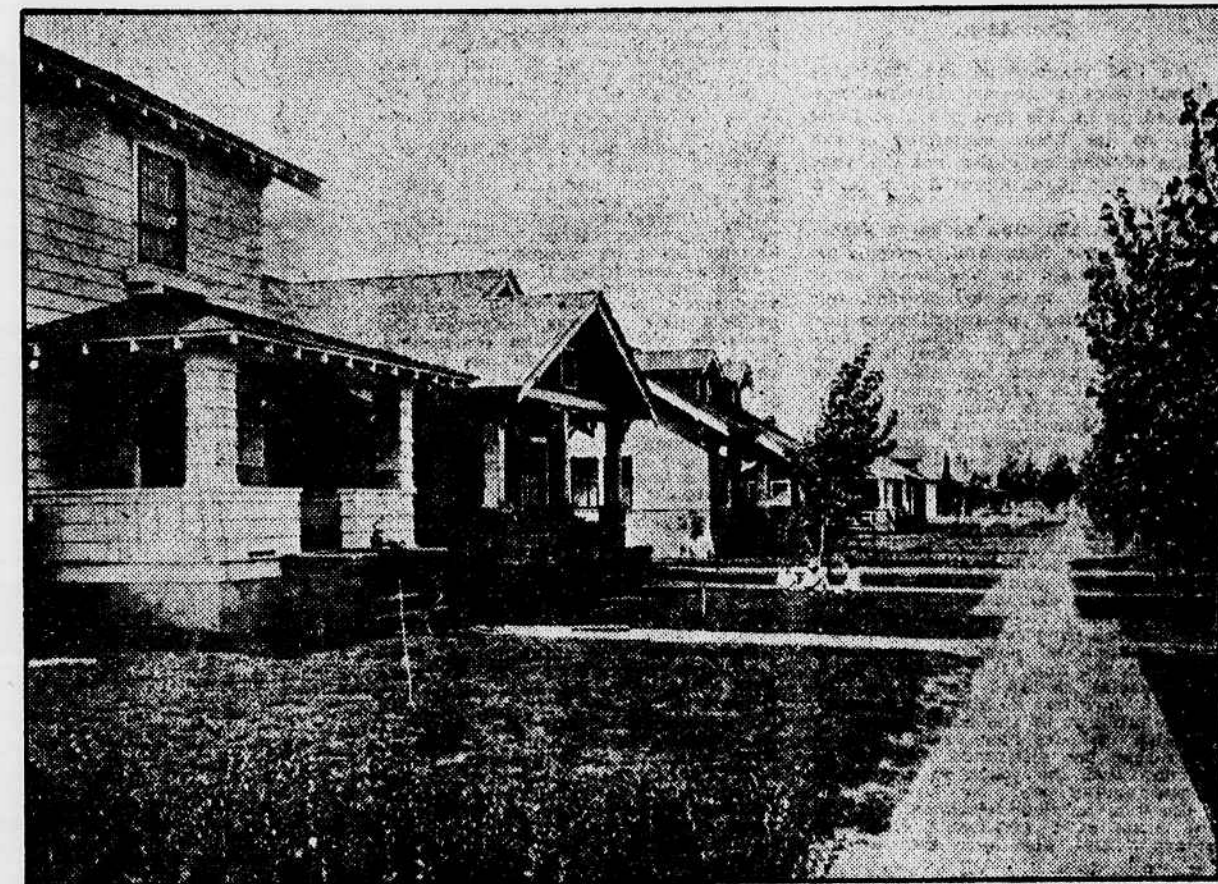
But first the farm for the soldier! That is the kernel from which is to grow this great tree of national development. We shall look at it as it lies in the nutshell. It is to reclaim the deserts, swamps and cut-over lands of the United States through the soldiers as the employees of Uncle Sam, and to enable them to buy the farms thereby created upon a series of low-interest payments which may run through a third or half a lifetime.

The work of reclamation will be done by the soldiers. They are to be given the opportunity to continue in the employ of the government, constructing dams and canals, blowing out stumps and clearing brush, digging ditches for drainage and, in short, building group settlements in practically every state of the Union.

The settlements will be model community centers, comprising townsites surrounded by forty or eighty acre farm homes, with all the advantages and none of the loneliness of ordinary country life. In doing this the soldier will receive the current wages for the special kind of labor for which he enlists. If he is an engineer he may lay out the canals. If a carpenter he may work at building the houses and barns, and if a mason he may be employed on the dams. The laborers will receive their wages from the government, and there will be well paid out-of-door work for all. After the settlements are completed, the houses and barns built and the soil put into shape each soldier will be given the right to pick out a farm home of his own and to pay for it at a low rate of interest on long time, covering perhaps thirty or forty years. Stock and farm implements, furnished by the government, may be paid for in a period of from five to ten years, and the whole will be so arranged that there will be no element of charity or pensioning in the transaction. The soldier will earn all he receives, and the government will get back in actual cash every cent it expends and also add greatly to the food supply and wealth of the nation.

This scheme, which originated with Secretary Lane, has the approval of the President. Congress has already appropriated \$200,000 for the preliminary investigations, and another appropriation of \$1,000,000 will probably have passed the Senate before this letter is published. The plans are now being worked out by the trained scientists of the Interior Department. Under the general direction of Arthur P. Davis, chief of the reclamation service, the government engineers are traveling over the United States investigating the possibilities. F. E. Weymouth, the chief of construction of the reclamation service, has taken charge of the so-called arid region formerly known as the great American desert. This is in the Rockies and the far west. It comprises the seventeen arid and semi-arid states, with the exception of the eastern parts of North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas. Those sections and the northeastern part of the country, including also all the land east of the Mississippi and north of the Ohio river, is in charge of F. W. Hanna, another reclamation engineer. It contains a large area of cut-over and swamp lands which can be redeemed. The southeastern section, which has the bulk of such lands, is being investigated by H. T. Cory, the man who shut the Colorado river out of the Salton sea for the Southern Pacific railway and who has long been connected with reclamation work of various kinds. In addition to these men the department has secured the services of Dr. Elwood Mead, recently in charge of the land settlement problem in California and for eight years before that connected with similar work in Australia.

The amount of territory we have for such schemes is enormous. I have talked with the reclamation engineers and can give a faint idea of the possibilities. According to them, the area of desert, swamp and cut-over lands that can be reclaimed is more than 300,000 square miles. It is bigger than



HOW UNCLE SAM'S FARMERS OF THE DESERTS ARE LIVING. THIS GIVES SOME IDEA OF THE SOLDIER'S HOME OF THE FUTURE.

the whole German empire, bigger than Austria and Hungary combined and bigger than France or the Spanish peninsula. Put it together and it would make a territory seven times as big as either Ohio, West Virginia or Kentucky, ten times as big as South Carolina and thirty-seven times the size of Massachusetts. It would equal six New Yorks, five Georgias, four Minnesotas or two Californias.

Some of this land is in the deserts and it will be reclaimed by irrigation. There is about 15,000,000 acres of this character, an amount three times as great as the cultivated parts of the Nile valley, which supports more than 11,000,000 people, and which in 1914 gave products for export amounting to \$120,000,000. Much of the Nile land is worth \$500 per acre.

Fifteen million acres! It is just about ten times the area we have already turned into farm settlements by our present reclamation projects. We have now 1,500,000 acres of those lands in cultivation, and there are under water 500,000 acres more which will soon be in use. The amount already reclaimed represents an investment of \$120,000,000, and the crops from it this year will sell for more than half that amount. At the present prices every acre will produce \$60 or upward per annum, and every cent that the government has laid out upon the land will have been paid back by the farmers within twenty years.

Those tracts are now inhabited by 50,000 families who own taxable farm property worth more than \$300,000,000. They are now producing crops which will annually sell for \$100,000,000, or seven million dollars more than all the gold taken out of the United States in 1916. In other words, the lands we have already reclaimed are yielding more than all the gold mines of the United States, including those of Alaska, and that notwithstanding when the youngest boys now in the draft were raw red babies those lands were as barren and dry as the most arid part of the Sahara. All this comes from 1,500,000 acres, and the engineers say we have ten times as much which can be developed as homes for the soldiers. The reclamation lands are now yielding the government about \$3,000,000 per annum, which is applied to new projects. It is believed that similar results will be had in connection with the farms for the soldiers.

But the deserts are the smallest factor in this great reclamation proposition. Their available lands are not one-fifth as large as the swamps. We have scattered over the United States swamp lands having an area of seventy-five or eighty million acres, underlaid with soil as rich as that of the deserts. The total is larger than Great Britain and Ireland, and equal in extent to the three states of Indiana, Illinois and Ohio. It is ten times as large as Holland, a drained country which is now feeding almost six million people; and at the same ratio it could feed sixty million, or more than half of our whole population. Holland is now draining the Zuider Zee to get more land, and the work is costing in the neighborhood of \$200 per acre. Many of our swamps can be drained for a few dollars per acre, and the surveys and plans for some of them have already been made. Before the war in Europe began the topographers of the geological survey had mapped out about 10,000,000

acres, and the work is so organized that they can tell us just where the swamps are and what has to be done to reclaim them.

These swamp lands are in many cases close to the centers of population. They are to be found in almost every state of the live, up-to-date east, and some of them near the big cities. Others are surrounded by farms worth \$100 an acre, and nearly all are accessible by water and rail to the markets. There are something like 72,000,000 acres east of the great plains, and twenty or thirty million acres in the Mississippi delta. Minnesota has about 4,000,000 acres and Maine three or four millions. We look upon Illinois as thoroughly settled; it is the heart of the corn belt and it has oodles of land worth \$300 an acre. Nevertheless there are more than 2,000,000 acres of flooded lands in Illinois that might be redeemed, and every acre will be as rich as any now farmed. There are seventeen different states in the east every one of which has more than a million acres of swamps, and there are twelve others each of which has from a quarter of a million to one million acres that can be easily drained.

The average stay-at-home of the east looks upon California as arid rather than wet. Nevertheless that state has some of our richest swamp lands. The Sacramento valley is several hundred miles long and its basin has millions of acres of wet lands which the government geographers have recently mapped. Drainage is going on there and land which a few years ago was worth nothing is now being sold as fast as it can be reclaimed at from \$100 to \$1,000 an acre. In the Sacramento river they have put dikes about an island and pumped out the water, and that island has now the largest asparagus farm of the world. In other places along the river the redeemed lands are devoted to celery, and they are now shipping carloads of that and other vegetables from there to the east.

The delta of the Mississippi has swamp lands that are far more valuable than the irrigated lands of Mesopotamia about the Tigris and Euphrates, for which the Kaiser planned his railroad from Berlin to Bagdad. The swamps there include more than 20,000,000 acres, and they are so rich that any forty acres will make a good farm. When the land is redeemed it is worth \$100 or upward per acre, and reclamation projects have already been undertaken by private parties here and there through it. Some of these are right on the edge of the cities. During my last visit to New Orleans I rode in a motor car from the principal hotel out to a 7,000-acre vegetable and fruit garden, which had been lifted, as it were, out of the bed of the swamp. The land is only five miles from the heart of the city, and it is richer than any part of the delta of the Nile or the Ganges. I saw thousands of orange trees and hundreds of acres of corn and cotton growing upon that land, and was told that the cost of maintaining the drainage, after the land had been cleared and the pumping arrangements installed, is only 50 to 75 cents per acre per annum. The tract I referred to is kept clear by pumping. Its steam pumps are daily lifting hundreds of millions of gallons of

water from its canals, and throwing it into the streams which carry it off into the Mexican gulf.

There are extensive swamp lands in Alabama and Georgia, and the same is true of Arkansas and Mississippi. A company has been organized and plans made to redeem a half million acres in the Yazoo basin. There are other schemes going on in other states, and especially in Florida, where millions of acres are being reclaimed. The available lands in Florida are almost as great as the whole state of South Carolina, a state which itself has a large area of swamps. In North Carolina and Virginia we have wet lands that will add greatly to our food supply. In North Carolina Lake Mattamuskeet has been pumped out and its 50,000 acres is now cut up into small farms. The tract is called New Holland. The settled lands about it are so rich that farms bring \$100 and upward per acre.

Farther north in Virginia, not far from Norfolk, lies about 150,000 acres that will some day be a winter market garden for New York and Boston. I refer to the great Dismal swamp, the edges of which have been already reclaimed. The lake is surrounded by lands devoted to trucking and the soil under it is exceedingly rich. The first crop usually raised after clearing such lands is what is known as stick corn. For this no plowing or cultivation is needed. The kernels are planted in holes in the ground made by a stick and the corn springs up among the stumps, conquering the weeds and yielding large crops. This is only at first. After a year or so the land must be treated like that of other farms of similar soil.

Coming to the cut-over lands which comprise the bulk of the area possible for the new proposition, I have had a talk with Mr. H. T. Cory, who has just returned from a trip through the greater part of the southern states, where he has been investigating this subject for Secretary Lane. He tells me that lands of this character are to be found all along the coasted plain from Virginia to Texas. They are the lands where the timber has been cut off by the great lumber companies and other parties from time to time. The stumps still stand and new trees have grown up among them corresponding in size to the time which has elapsed since the first clearing was done. Mr. Cory says that there is something like 200,000,000 acres of such land in the south, and that a large proportion of it has as good soil as the average farm of Indiana. At the above estimate those cut-over lands would make about nine states the size of Ohio, Kentucky or Virginia. Reduce the estimate by one-half and the available territory would be bigger by the size of Kentucky than the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, which now has something like 45,000,000 people.

A great deal of this cut-over land is being reclaimed by private parties, and some of it is paying more than its original price by the first one or two crops. Mr. Cory told me of a man who bought a cut-over farm two years ago and paid one-tenth down. This year the seller told him he would be glad to accept the crop on the land for the

balance, but his offer was not taken. Some such lands are used for raising peanuts, which is now one of the profitable crops of the southwest; others are turned into cotton plantations and others to corn. These lands are usually held in large tracts. They are owned by lumber companies and individuals who have made their profits out of the timber and will be glad to get rid of them at a low price. I am told that there are so many of them that the government can buy all it needs for the soldier experiment at almost its own terms.

There is one thing, however, that must be emphasized in connection with this reclamation. This is that it is a billion-dollar proposition, undertaken by a billion-dollar country, and that there are billions in it for the United States, if it can be kept outside politics and handled after scientific business methods. In reclaiming the desert lands, which, as I have said, are paying their own way and furnishing millions a year for new projects, the government has developed a large division of reclamation experts, and through them it will be able to organize the new scheme upon an economical and business-paying long time proposition. To do this the congressional grants must be made without cheese-paring and all pork-barrel propositions kept out.

The plan is to make farms for the soldiers, but the soldiers are to pay back to the government every cent that it expends in their behalf. Now it is estimated that each farm of eighty acres with its improvements will cost at least \$5,000. If 10 per cent of the 4,000,000 men now in the Army should elect to take farms we shall have created 400,000 farm homes, costing as a whole something like \$2,000,000,000.

But those farms will be only the beginning of the reclamation. They will be followed by the creation of others for civilians who wish to go back to the land and for immigrants, and this will result in the using of a very large part of this 300,000,000 acres. That amount turned into new farms will increase the number of farms now in the United States by more than 50 per cent, and add more than one-half to the acreage now under cultivation. The average value of our farm lands per acre in 1900 was \$15 and by 1910 it had more than doubled, being by the census of that date fixed at \$32. These new lands will be worth far more than the average, and they will form a live interest-bearing investment that will increase in value for generations to come. In another letter I shall write more about this project and how it is being worked out for the good of the soldier. FRANK G. CARPENTER.

## The Irregular Males.

OLIVER ISELIN, on leave in Tuxedo, was praising the American girls engaged in war work overseas. "And they're good girls," he said, "better girls, I believe, than our country ever turned out before." "They're certainly better than the old ladies, male and female, who spy on them on the pretense of looking after their morals." "One of these old ladies, an elderly New York broker, was talking to a canteen girl in Paris." "Yes, the girl said, 'I adore my work. The only thing I complain of is the irregularity of the mails.'" "The old broker heaved a sigh and tried to take the girl's hand, but she drew it away." "Ah, yes," he said, "the males were irregular, too, in my young days. As we used to put it—never trust a female too far nor a male too near."

## An Axiom.

A CONGRESSMAN at a reception in New York, was urged by a peace-maker to come and separate two so-called "parlor bolsheviks," who were wrangling so bitterly that a fight was feared.

The congressman hurried to the contending parlor bolsheviks, he listened to their shrill and angry voices a moment and then he shrugged and turned away.

"Always remember," he said to the peace-maker, "that these chaps who are all wind never come to blows."

## The Sermon Reader.

A CABINET officer usually reads his speeches, but he shares with his Scottish ancestors all their hatred of written sermons.

He told one day an old Scotch woman's remark about a minister whose sermons were always read.

"How's the new minister gettin' on?" a neighbor asked the old woman. "Gettin' on?" said she. "Well, he's gettin' on like a crow in a tater field—two dabs and a look-up."